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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00
CIAE-00 (ISO) W
----------111219 202147Z /43
O 181656Z APR 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5495

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 3266

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GR, PPDC
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: A) STATE 89686; B) ATHENS 3008

1. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS CALLED ME TO HIS RESIDENCE LATE TODAY (APRIL 18) TO GIVE ME HIS REPLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER, (REF. A) WHICH I HAD HANDED HIM ON APRIL 11. (REF B) SEPTEL WILL COVER ADDITIONAL COMMENTS HE MADE.

2. TEXT FOLLOWS:

QUOTE
ATHENS, 18TH APRIL, 1978

DEAR MR PRESIDENT:

YOU HAVE MY WARM THANKS FOR THE MESSAGE YOU SENT ME THROUGH AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY AND FOR THE KIND WORDS YOU HAD FOR ME PERSONALLY.

I APPRECIATE AND SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE NECESSITY OF A STABLE RELATIONSHIP OF FRIENDSHIP AND CO-
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OPERATION BETWEEN GREECE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. A RELATIONSHIP BASED ON THE LONG TRADITION OF MANIFOLD TIES UNITING OUR TWO PEOPLES AND ON MUTUAL CONFIDENCE. I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU NOT ONLY THAT I BELIEVE IN THIS NECESSITY BUT ALSO THAT I PERSISTENTLY TRIED TO DISSIPATE THE BITTERNESS CAUSED BY PAST MISTAKES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS. AND I CAN SAY THAT IN THE LAST TWO YEARS SUBSTANTIAL

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IMPROVEMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THIS REGARD.

I BELIEVE, MR PRESIDENT, THAT THE CONFIDENCE
WHICH GOVERNS OUR RELATIONS DICTATES A FRANK EXCHANGE OF
VIEWS ON THE PROBLEMS WHICH CONCERN US. FOR THIS REASON
I SHOULD NOT CONCEAL FROM YOU THAT I REGRETFULLY CONCLUDE
THAT WE DIFFER IN OUR EVALUATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE
DECISION OF YOUR ADMINISTRATION TO ASK CONGRESS TO LIFT
THE TURKISH ARMS' EMBARGO. AND I WOULD LIKE YOU TO BELIEVE,
MR PRESIDENT, THAT OUR POSITION IN THIS MATTER IS NOT
MOTIVATED EITHER BY AN INTENT TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL
AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED STATES OR BY ENMITY TOWARDS TURKEY
WITH WHOM WE SINCERELY WISH TO REESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS.
BUT THIS DECISION MAY HARMFULLY AFFECT THE INTERESTS OF GREECE.

IT APPEARS BOTH FROM THE PUBLIC AND
CINFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
THAT TURKEY HAS UNDERTAKEN NO COMMITMENT FOR THE RESTORATION
OF PEACE IN OUR AREA IN RETURN FOR THE LIFTING OF THE
EMBARGO. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR
TURKEY TO BELIEVE THAT IT PAYS TO FOLLOW A POLICY OF
THREATS AND, AS A CONSEQUENCE, TO BECOME MORE INTRANSIGENT.
AND IN THIS INTRANSIGENCE SHE WOULD BE ENCOURAGED BY THE
FACT THAT THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO MAY STRENGTHEN HER
MILITARY POSTURE AS AGAINST GREECE. THIS WOULD RESULT:

(A) IN RENDERING MORE DIFFICULT,

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IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, THE SOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION. ALREADY,
WE HAVE A CONFIRMATION OF THIS IN THE LAST TURKISH PROPOSALS
WHICH, BY ALL INDICATIONS, ARE LEADING THE PROBLEM TO AN IMPASSE,
AND,

(B) IN DANGEROUSLY COMPLICATING GRECO-
TURKISH DIFFERENCES OVER THE AEGEAN.

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ACTION SS-25

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O 181656Z APR 78 ZFF-4
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 3266

EXDIS

I AM CONFIDENT, MR PRESIDENT, THAT IN HANDLING THE WHOLE SITUATION YOUR ADMINISTRATION WILL ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THESE DANGERS THAT CAUSE OUR CONCERN.

I AM AFRAID, MR PRESIDENT, THAT IF THE GREEK PEOPLE WERE TO GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE UNITED STATES ARE LED TO MAKE A CHOICE BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY TO THE DETRIMENT OF MY COUNTRY, THIS WILL HINDER NOT ONLY MY EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE OLD CORDIALITY IN THE RELATIONS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES, BUT ALSO MY ENDEAVOURS TO STABILIZE THE POSITION OF GREECE IN THE FOLD OF THE ALLIANCE.

I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXPLAINING IN DETAIL MY VIEWS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF OUR AREA BOTH TO SECRETARY VANCE, DURING HIS VISIT TO ATHENS, AND TO AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY. I TRUST THAT THEY WERE CONVEYED TO YOU.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU, MR PRESIDENT, THAT I PROFOUNDLY BELIEVE NOT ONLY IN THE USEFULNESS BUT ALSO IN THE NECESSITY OF FRIENDSHIP AND CLOSE COOPERATION OF OUR TWO PEOPLES. THIS IS WHY I SINCERELY WISH THAT THE FUTURE WILL PROVE MY FEARS AND MY CONCERNS TO BE WRONG AND WILL SHOW THAT YOUR EVALUATION WAS MORE ACCURATE THAN MINE.
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I HOPE THAT DURING OUR MEETING IN MAY WE MAY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXCHANGING VIEWS ON ALL THE ISSUES THAT AFFECT US.

WITH MY HIGHEST REGARD AND BEST WISHES,

SINCERELY,

CONSTANTINE KARAMANLIS
UNQUOTE. END TEXT.
MCCLOSKEY

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